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NEWS of the CAMP

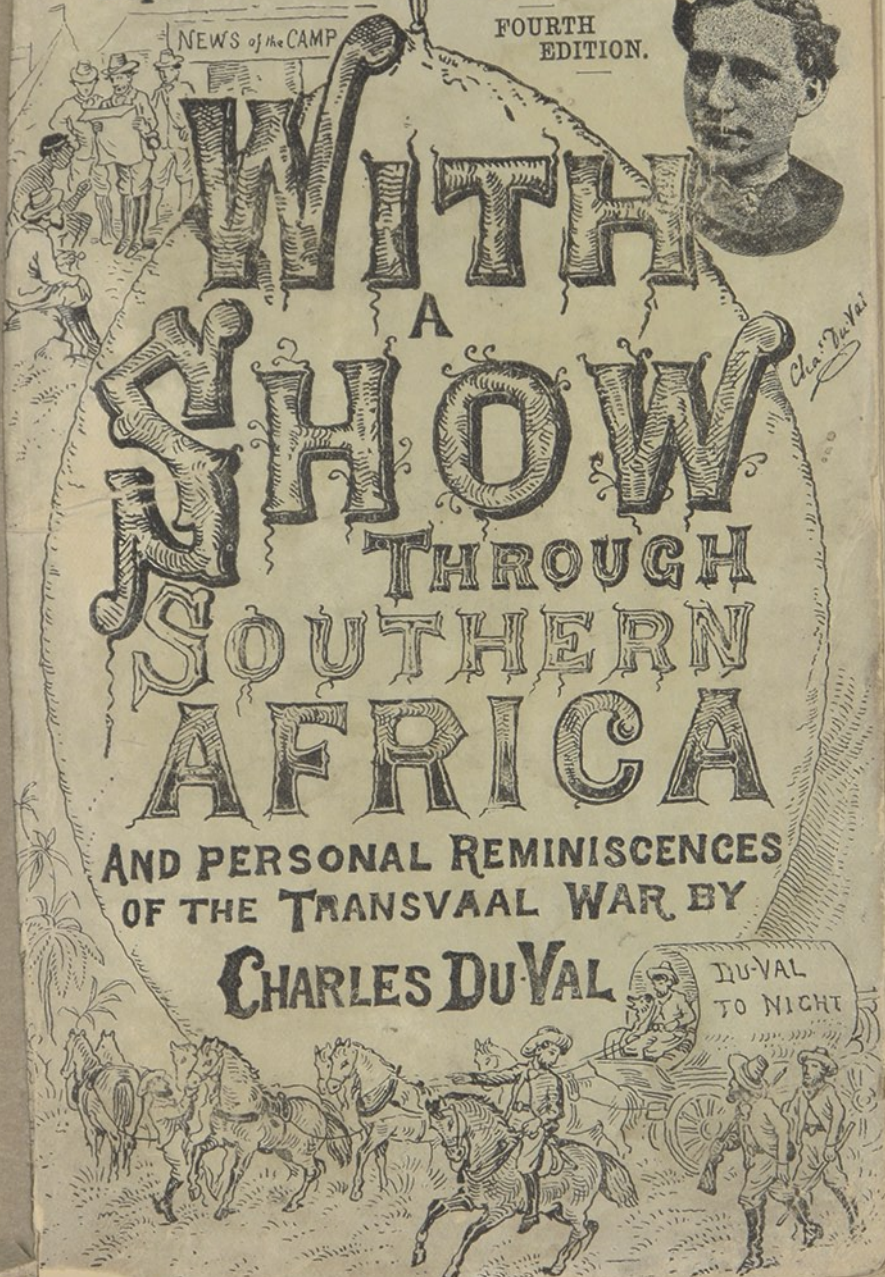


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THROUGH  
SOUTHERN  
AFRICA

AND PERSONAL REMINISCENCES  
OF THE TRANSVAAL WAR BY

CHARLES DUVAL

DUVAL  
TO NIGHT



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Charles DuVal

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AND

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

BY

CHARLES DU VAL,

LATE OF THE CARABINEERS, ATTACHÉ TO THE STAFF OF GARRISON  
COMMANDANT, AND EDITOR OF THE "NEWS OF THE CAMP" DURING THE  
INVESTMENT OF PRETORIA.

WITH PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR,

*And Other Illustrations.*

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FOURTH EDITION.

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Leaving Natal for the Transvaal.

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## CHAPTER X.

ON THE 'TREKK'—MORE TRAVELLING ENJOYMENTS—FAURESMITH  
—JAGERSFONTEIN — PHILLIPOLIS — COLESBERG — HANOVER  
—SPRINGBOK SHOOTING—MIDDLEBURG—ECONOMISING TIME.

'VORWARTZ!' was the motto of sturdy old Blucher, and adopting the saying of the Prussian general, again we started 'on the trekk' through Southern Africa. Fauresmith, the object-town of our next move, is distant about seventy or eighty miles from Bloemfontein—it is very difficult to quote distances accurately in describing South African travels, as there is little or no system of milestones or marks to guide the traveller. Distance is measured by hours, and no two persons appear to agree as to the amount of time required for a given journey, inasmuch as the relative pace of horses, species of conveyances, and modes of travelling vary so much, that forming anything like an accurate idea is not only difficult but often impossible. You meet a transport rider moving slowly along with his bullock-waggon, and he will probably tell you in answer to your query as to how far it is to Fauresmith, that it will take him four days to accomplish the distance; while the post-cart driver, whose movements are comparatively express-train-like in rapidity, says 'A short day and a half;' and the Kaffir tramping the road will probably say 'Very far,' and pantomime with any amount of gesture his ideas of measurement. But whether it is an hour or a week, with the wretched 'Veld' tracks that serve as roads not only through the Free State, but in parts of South Africa with more pretentious forms of government, the distances are surely long enough; and in bad weather it is no exaggeration to say that he who travels by horse-waggon or Cape cart, does so at the possible risk of fractured bones or dislocated neck. In dry seasons the dangers are minimised, and I have spent many a pleasant day rolling along over the boundless 'Veld,' or viewing it from the saddle of a real Dutch 'paard,' whose Boer training exhibits itself in an untiring canter, or, easiest movement in equitation, a 'triple.'

The afternoon of the second day brought us with one horse dead lame to a Boer house, the 'Baas' of which, through his better-half, kindly proffered his hospitality, which was duly accepted. He showed me a strong-looking, rather fresh horse, price £21; said I could leave my lame one till I wanted him. I demurred, said I would reflect till morning, and sang him the chorus of 'The Little Wee Dog' in a very free Cape Dutch translation. Its marvellous effect, however, was electrical, and the negotiation in horse-flesh resulted in my taking his gallant bay at a reduction of £6 next morning.

A very simple and, in most cases, well-meaning and hospitable people, the African Dutch have had many of these originally good qualities spoiled by the abuses to which they have been subjected by passing travellers, the more so since the diamond discovery attracted to South African regions a fair amount of the British population who, as a representative class, can scarcely be said by their bearing and manners to shed lustre upon the land of their birth, or pleasure on that of their adoption. These natural prejudices did not interfere with Mynheer Liebenberg and his 'Vrouw,' who, understanding English, was the medium of explaining some of my efforts to excite her 'Baas' into risibility. It was not a difficult matter; very little humour set him well off. We sang songs alternately—that is, I sang songs; his musical repertoire was confined to Dutch hymns, which he warbled with the lungs of a Stentor, a concertina affording an accompaniment.

We crossed the Riet river next day, and mounted the other bank, aided by a span of oxen, the horses being unable to pull up the sandy drift, and camped at night near a rather swell Boer farm. No forage or bread to be had; so a friendly Kaffir's offer of goats'-milk was accepted; the boys made some flour-and-water cakes they called 'slap-jacks,' and we had a good time generally.

Three rivers were crossed next day; and in the afternoon, when but a short distance from Fauresmith, we encountered a fierce storm, accompanied by hail, thunder, and lightning, followed by another miserable night in the waggon. Fry and Sam, who had taken the horses with them to search for a farm near by, did not return till next day, when the former, attired in a full suit of Boer's clothes, came riding up with bread, eggs, and other supplies from a house where they had spent the night, having fallen into several sluits and rivulets during the storm before he discovered the home of the good-natured farmer in whose gear he was then luxuriating. The supplies were most acceptable, as having run out of bread-stuffs, we had been compelled to subsist



on a half-cooked wild-duck, shot by one of my party, and which was either wholly raw, or reduced to charcoal and cinders.

Fauresmith at last, and a very mild specimen of a town. A few stores, a court-house, a couple of hotels, and you have its description. That it has a future is very possible, as within an hour's drive is the Jagersfontein diamond mine, which some geological specialists will tell you is the mine of days to come.

Phillipolis, two days from Fauresmith, we reached after a chapter of minor accidents and the usual stoppages, dig-outs, twist-the-wheels, and other artifices attendant upon waggon-travelling in South Africa, and found it even a quieter place than the one we had left. It had an hotel—at least, the proprietor so called it—which, had it not been for the amusement a captive baboon in the back-yard afforded, would have been positively unbearable. The people, however, were most agreeable, and, as in all towns in the Free State, sent their seats to the place of entertainment—a system of securing stalls that would rather surprise a Bond Street librarian.

Next day we left the Free State and crossed the Orange river by a pontoon, *en route* for Colesberg, at which snug-lying little town we arrived late on the following evening, and remained two nights. The slumber of the second of these was hardly assisted by a number of worthy Scots, who made the occasion of my visit an opportunity for a reunion which prolonged the chorus of 'Auld Lang Syne' till day began to dawn. An enterprising showman with a merry-go-round was doing here a roaring trade, his 'horse' and 'cars' being hugely patronised by the Hottentots and Kaffirs of the native location, who seemed never to tire of their brain-whirling, eternal roundabout sensation.

Colesberg is very much a centre for Dutch population, and boasts two churches—the Dutch Reformed and the Dopper. The latter is an ascetic branch of the former, though to ordinary people there does not appear great room for much plainer or extremier views than those already held by the doctrinaires of the Reformed. The Dopper goes in for a quaker-like simplicity, and his pride (if he may be credited with so unchristian-like a feeling) is to abjure the pomps and vanities of this wicked world when they present themselves in the forms of smart clothes, cleanliness, amusement, or other form of bait by which the Evil One secures the unthinking; so finding even the austerities of his original faith too lax for his ideas of piety, he 'reformed' the Reformed, and founded his own system of worship. Many of these religionists—as indeed, I may say, many Boers of both species of faith—possess



houses in the town which they only occupy once every three months, on the occasion of their 'Naachtmaal,' or Communion celebration. They come in on these occasions from long distances, and combine piety and pleasure, religious observance and business, in a very methodical and matter-of-fact manner.

Hanover, the little village wherein we spent a night on our way to the Diamond Fields, was the next point, and we arrived there after a couple of days' travel of the usual kind, which may be briefly epitomised by stating that every hill resolved itself into a battle with the horses, there being one or two 'sticks' amongst the team; an occasional deadlock of a couple of hours at some hole or soft place in the road, where the waggon would get embedded and require digging out; half-hour intervals of the invigorating exercise of all hands twisting the wheels, together with exhausting equine flagellation, and somewhat demoralising imprecation.

Hanover is a mere village, well laid out, well watered and planted. Some day will possibly see it a flourishing town—who can tell, in this land of surprises? Accompanied by Fry, the second day at Hanover I went out to shoot springbok, numbers being on the flats within a few miles of the town. It is one thing to go out to shoot springbok; it is quite another thing to do so; and there is a third point to be considered—the finding of your way back to town again. We rode out, our rifles slung behind us, and, having trotted leisurely in the direction suggested, at the end of half an hour's time we sighted the antelopes quietly browsing. Off saddle and knee-halter the horses and proceed on foot was the order, which we did, and tried ineffectually some long-range shots at the springbok; then, taking different directions, I secured a position behind an anthill, where I murderously awaited some straying buck or doe. Fry, firing away in the hollow, drove the herd up in my direction, and one of them presently gave me a chance at about three hundred yards' distance. My shot was a little low, but very close, and I was surprised to find he took no notice of its proximity. I fired again—this time a little over him; still he quietly walked onwards. But having got his range, my third shot struck him, and evidently mortally wounded him; for he gave eight or ten bounds up into the air, then feebly ran a couple of hundred yards, and fell amongst the Karoo bush. With all the enthusiasm of a huntsman I dashed on foot in the direction he had taken, and spent an hour in the vain endeavour to discover where he lay. Giving up the search, I turned to look for my saddle and horse. The latter was grazing at some distance; but the saddle, like the buck, was nowhere visible. Small as the Karoo-bush is,



it is quite a concealment for moderately sized objects, and more by luck than design, I suddenly stumbled on the saddle and housings, and had the pleasure of witnessing a horse-chase performed by my 'Jäger' comrade Fry, whose steed he had omitted to knee-halter, and who now, rejoicing in his freedom, defied all efforts to capture him, and led his late rider a lively dance for upwards of an hour and a half before success crowned his efforts. The day was hot, the ground was burnt up and caked, no drop of water visible save and except that which the mirage depicted, and our tongues cleaving to the roofs of our mouths; and to crown the enjoyment of our springbok-shooting expedition, it was impossible, from the sameness of the lines of hills and general contour of the country, to form a certain opinion as to the direction of the town. It must be somewhere—an astute proposition on which we were agreed; and so we rode over the Karoo, its withered bush crushing crisply under each charger's hoof, until the sight of a Boer farm raised our sinking spirits. Having refreshed at the dam, we hied 'de huis to,' and learned that we were progressing favourably in a direct line from the village we desired to reach. Securing a landmark or two, we turned our horses' heads, and, sunburnt and weary, with not even an ounce of venison to exhibit, we sighted Hanover, at the entrance to which Fry shot a hare, and redeemed our character from the foul reproach of coming back completely empty-handed, though it may be submitted by the critical that to go out for springbok and return with hare can scarcely be supposed to realise the aspirations of a mighty hunter of the bounding antelope on Southern Africa's plains.

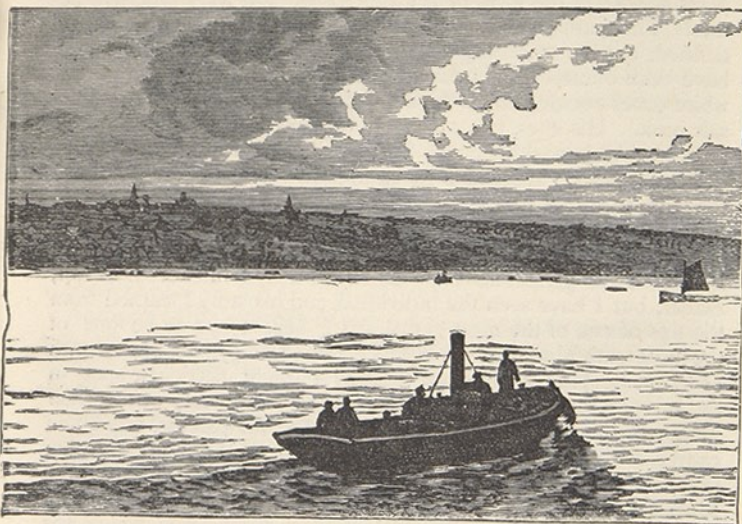
Daybreak start next day. More Scotsmen, more 'Auld Lang Syne,' and late—no, early hours the night before. It's the road to the left—no, the right—perhaps the middle—yes, most likely, as it is Middleburg we are bound for. Take it by all means; which we did, and went ahead without a check till mid-day, when a passing post-cart driver, in answer to Sam, informed us we were on the Graaff Reinnett road, and had left that to our destination some eighteen miles behind. Vastly pleasant; nothing for it but to take a farm road to the left, and try to get on the right track that way. Now the main roads, I have already stated, are mere tracks, so readers can form an idea of the glories of a farm road. We took it, and never shall I forget the continued scene of hard labour, straining horses, breaking harness, and trial of patience involved in the attempt to discover by its aid the right path which we ought to have taken. We did it, however, though how we succeeded, especially with horses not too tractable, I have often looked upon

as a mystery. We arrived at Middleburg at 5.30 in the afternoon of the second day from Hanover, and the inhabitants, although on the tiptoe of expectation for our coming, deemed it improbable that the short time to elapse between our arrival and the announced hour for the presentation of 'Odds and Ends' to the Middleburgers, would permit the completion of the arrangements. Haul down the baggage, Sam; all hands to work; 'span in' all the spare Kaffirs available to carry seats and for platform building. Here, come along half a dozen of you descendants of Krel, and carry a piano, and you shall have as much Cape brandy as you can soak your woolly heads in. Now then, steady — easy. Shade of Mendelssohn; there's a chord! as a gentle Fingo pushes up the key-board in his enthusiasm, and strikes about three octaves simultaneously with his sinewy arm. Go quietly—all together—and away moves the piano, hoisted on the shoulders of half a dozen African aborigines, and, carried to an accompaniment of continual chatter of tongues, at length reaches the public room, just as the audience assemble on the steps outside. Chairs from one place, lamps from another, barrels from a third, and planks from a fourth. Such are the exigencies of giving entertainments in smaller towns in South Africa. However, with good-natured assistance generally afforded, the eight o'clock chime of the town clock saw everything complete, the curtain ready to draw up, and 'the show just agoing to commence.'



lady, whose piety and devotion led her to make so long a journey, and the worthy Captain had nothing but praise for the demeanour and manner exhibited by her on all occasions.

A good many years ago, a somewhat forward boy, I crushed my way through the crowd surrounding her carriage, opposite the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, and shouting the words 'Vive Eugénie,' received a graceful acknowledgment from an elegant-looking woman, whose face was mantled by a bright blush, and who smiled as she recognised an oft-repeated cry which echoed and re-echoed through the streets of Imperial France of that day.



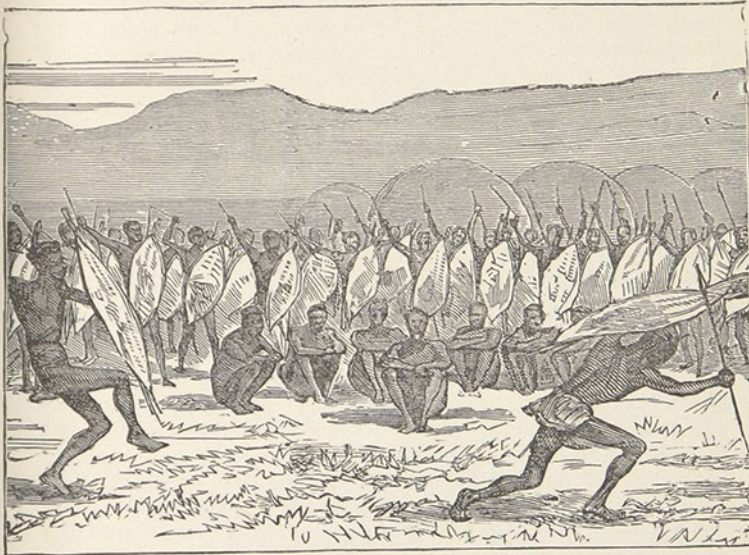
Port Elizabeth.

The picture was a good deal changed now: the dark hair had become streaked with grey, the lines of sorrow and care visible in every lineament; but the contour of face and figure was still retained—the elegance and grace of the heyday of her charms, years had failed to efface, and as she walked the quarter-deck, clad in the sombre hues of mourning, her sad fate—now entirely alone, without husband, without child—the object of her journey, and her romantic story, created an interest which deepened into respect in all who had the privilege of thus beholding her.

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After running forty-four miles, we stopped at a roadside house, kept by a Dutch blacksmith, and several other things besides, amongst which politician appeared pre-eminent. He spoke English perfectly, and was quite *au fait* to most things in political circles. We were not long in his society before it became a difficult matter to say whether his dislike of the English or his hatred of the native races was the strongest. He was civil enough to individuals, though evidently dogmatical in his opinions, and his diatribes at Imperial imbecility, as exemplified in the conduct of the Zulu War, were neither few nor lenient. There was quite



A Zulu War Dance.

too much truth in a great many of his home-thrusts, and also in his hypothesis that had the war been carried on by 3,000 or 4,000 mounted men, with a good, strongly-guarded base, near the border, Zululand could have been raided from Natal to Amatonga, from the sea to the Transvaal, and that which took a larger English army than fought at Waterloo nearly a year to accomplish, might have been carried out in as many weeks as it occupied months, and at a fractional part of the outlay. 'Bah!' said he; 'don't tell me. The Boers know how to fight the Kaffirs—on





Zulus returning from a successful expedition.



Close to the town is its second edition in black type, in the shape of a large Kaffir village, where a zealous missionary engages in the Sisyphus-like task of rolling the precepts of Christianity into the native understanding. Verulam, I my mention, is considered a 'serious' town, and is a reputed stronghold of the followers of John Wesley. Far away on every side are mountains well bushed, farms, and plantations laid out, and a general look of warmth and comfort, heightened as the picture is by a golden

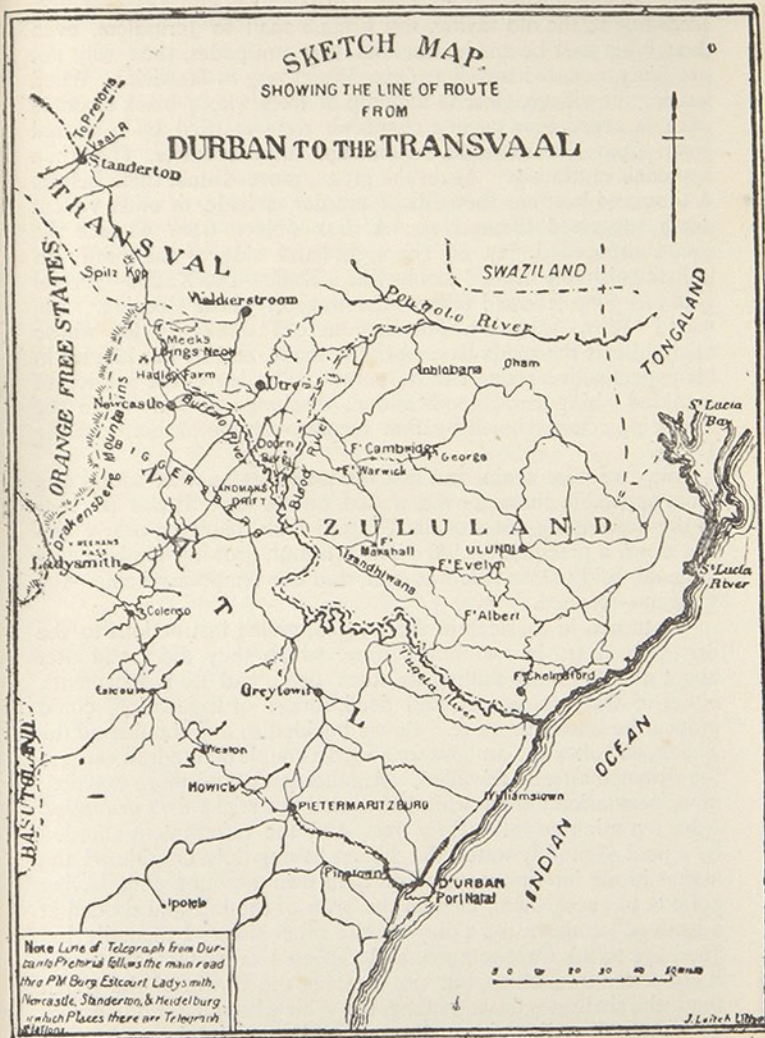


A "Veld" Fire.

glow as the sun sinks quickly to his rest. There is a peculiarity in the sudden transit from day to night which obtains in tropical and semi-tropical climes—where the moment the sun's disc sinks below the horizon the night falls at once, and enwraps his darkest mantle on all around.

No better description of the setting sun in tropic regions has ever been written than that embodied in the following lines—





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## CHAPTER XXI

PRETORIA—A WORD OR TWO ON THE TRANSVAAL—FIRST INTERVIEW WITH SIR OWEN LANYON—BOER SCARES—A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING—DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATIONS AND DYNAMITE—D'ARCY'S HORSE—RUMOURS OF WARS—'WITH THE SHOW' AT THE CAMP—ENTR'ACTE INTELLIGENCE—PICQUET DUTY—MY FIRST PATROL.

ON the 18th November, 1880, after twenty-seven days chiefly consumed in the most difficult, and I may add dangerous travel, we reached Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, and seat of the British Administration, then presided over by Sir W. Owen Lanyon.

At the time of my arrival in its capital, the Transvaal was, through a number of fortuitous circumstances and the judicious advertising of land speculators, attracting considerable attention amongst intending emigrants, principally from Ireland; and having undertaken a series of papers on South Africa for the columns of a leading daily journal, I felt more exclusively interested in it than the previous portions of the country I had visited.

At the time of my visit, a number of self-constituted land companies appeared to be doing a profitable business, through their European agents, with the possessors of small capitals, who, lured by the glowing descriptions of the farms announced for sale, negotiated their purchases at home, and on their arrival in Pretoria found that their magnificent estates existed either in portions of the country where malaria and fever had taken up a permanent residence and held prior claims, or in the imagination of the intelligent individuals who prepared the bogus plans and title-deeds, on the faith of which they 'cashed up.' In one office I saw a Transvaal 'Guide,' with map attached, on the obverse side of which was printed, in magniloquent language, the tempting bait of 'Farms free of rent for ever at three shillings an acre and upwards, on easy terms to the purchaser.'

In this 'Guide,' but scarcely 'philosopher and friend,' the manifold resources of the land, both in mineral wealth and farming capacity, were held up with such ingenuity that the picture of rural felicity, comfort, and prospective wealth might

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well have dazzled the eyes of the hardworked farmer at home, and made him an easy prey to the devices of unscrupulous speculators. But the opposite side of the painting was carefully concealed. The goldmines were spoken of as second only to those in Australia, which galvanized a continent into life; the coal was in seams to put Lancashire to the blush; iron and copper were to be had for the mere asking; but the facts were quietly ignored that the amount which had been found was infinitesimal, that prospectors had failed time after time, that there was no possibility of using the coal for want of railroad transport to reduce its carriage to a payable level (a rule which equally applied to other minerals), and that stock-farming was subject to the severest losses by epidemics and diseases peculiar to the land, with which it was found impossible to successfully grapple.

And then, looming dark on the horizon of 'the land flowing with milk and honey' (see 'Guide'), there was the stalwart form of the Dutch Boer, who had as little affection for the British immigrant as he had for the British Government, regarding the former as an interloper, the latter as a usurper.

The first Dutch settlers, too, helped themselves liberally to all the best land in the country, their ideas of enough for one being at least 3,000 morgen, or more than 6,000 English acres. As more than one allotment of this quantity fell to the share of individuals, some Boers were absolute proprietors of tracts of territory extending almost as far as the eye could reach; and though possibly they tilled and farmed, in the English acceptance of the term, but a few acres for immediate use, they held on with extreme tenacity to their stake in the country, and emulated the advice of the eminent Irish agitator by keeping 'a firm grip on the land.'

To reach this 'milk-and-honey' country from Natal, Durban being its nearest seaport, a pilgrimage such as I had just completed was necessary, over 500 miles of mere tracks, crossing numerous rivers where bridges were unknown, and in cases of wet weather suffering hardships and delay to which the worst European travel was comfort itself.

But though many disadvantages there undoubtedly were for small-moneyed emigrants, the more so when induced to purchase their farms through agents at home, there appeared no absolute reason why the Transvaal should not, under fairly favourable conditions, become quite as successful as other portions of South Africa.



I found the Transvaal Boer a discontented and somewhat objectionable individual: he had his grievances, and he grumbled accordingly. His fathers left the Cape Colony to escape from British sway, and planted their flag in Natal, where his rule had but a short lease of life when Great Britain stepped in; and once more the Dutchman 'trekked' to fresh fields, and crossing the Vaal River, established the South African Republic, receiving at the time a guarantee that the pursuit was ended, and he would be interfered with no more. But the promises of governments are not always sacred; they are but the words of mortal men. The Boer's moment of trial arrived, and it is an indisputable fact that when the annexation by England took place, the powers that then were in the Transvaal were not in a flourishing condition—anarchy and poverty went hand in hand—the former in the governing body, the latter in its Treasury; and so her Majesty's Special Commissioner called in, and with words of honeyed accent in his proclamation, quietly attached the Republic to the British Crown. Many promises of a rose-coloured character were embodied in the clauses of the annexation programme, one of which reads as follows: 'And I further proclaim and make known that the Transvaal will remain a separate government, with its own laws and legislation, and that it is the wish of her Most Gracious Majesty that it shall enjoy the fullest legislative privilege compatible with the circumstances of the country and the intelligence of the people;' and I was glad to read that little condition relative to the intelligence of the people, which helped to explain the fact of there being no really representative form of Government in the Transvaal, Boer intelligence having evidently been weighed in the British balance, and found wanting. The system of legislature consisted of an administrator and a council, comprising the Government officials and a number of nominee representatives appointed by the Crown, which latter the Boers looked upon as what they really were, the mere automaton echoes of governmental opinion.

The Boer has many points to recommend him, and his proverbial hospitality has been warped by the antagonism he feels against what he considers the injustice he has suffered. There is no doubt he will bear considerable improvement; he has no elements of progress lying dormant which can be easily quickened to action, and as a farmer he is, from our point of view, a sloven, and wholly apathetic. 'The fewness of his wants,' as an eminent politician has ably said, constitute 'the riches of his possessions;' and when you have filled his flesh-pots with the stew of the 'schaap'

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(sheep), his pipe with Boer tobacco, and poured him out a decoction he is pleased to call coffee, and which is to be had all day long, and night too probably, in a Transvaal farmhouse, you have crowned his happiness in the present; and, if he *can* read, his library consists of a well-thumbed copy of 'de Bijbel' (Bible) to the contents of which he is devoted, and no doubt he is equally satisfied as to his happiness in the future.

There is a point of etiquette that you must not omit on each and every occasion you meet him and his, and that is the sacred duty of shaking hands. It is a somewhat monotonous performance, and on visiting a farm where the family is extensive, becomes rather fatiguing, as every member of the household expects this mark of courtesy to be religiously observed, from the 'Baas' and the 'Vrouw,' down to the little two-year-old toddling about the floor, and whose palm may not be improved by the attractive particles of a well-moistened piece of sugar-cane upon which he or she is refecting. Nevertheless, this is a duty owing to Boer society, and its non-observance may be construed to mean all sorts of things inimical to a proper understanding, and the reciprocity of a perfect *entente cordiale*.

The Boer is pious, and keeps his religious duties with strict observance; his creed is that of Calvin, and outside its lines he steadfastly refuses to look; but he is quite unobtrusive in his sentiments, and his bigotry, if he has any, he is satisfied to keep to himself—and it is not of an implacable character, as fairly instanced in the following story, founded, I believe, on actual facts—

A Roman Catholic bishop celebrated for his wit and readiness, as well as his exceptional learning, and whose acquaintance I had the privilege of making in Port Elizabeth, was travelling 'up country' with a two-wheeled Cape-cart, accompanied only by his driver, a 'Cape boy.' Overtaken by night, some miles from their destination, they drew rein near the house of a Dutch Boer, and the 'boy' went up to ask a night's shelter for his master. The 'Baas' inquired as to who his master was, and the 'boy' replied—

'A Predekant' (clergyman).

'What kind of Predekant?' said Mynheer.

'Roman Catholic,' replied the Cape juvenile.

'Ow!' said Mynheer, 'de duivel is dar!' (the devil is there), and refused point-blank to allow the bishop to enter his domicile.

His lordship was a man of considerable resource, and with the aid of a flute, which he played fairly well, and a traveller's flask of brandy, settled himself inside his cart and began to waken the surrounding 'Veld' to the strains of 'Vat you goed and trekk



Ferreira,' a melody which has been termed the South African National Anthem, and which is the most familiar air in the country.

Orpheus and his lute was as nothing to the bishop and his flute, for half a dozen bars had hardly been played when the head of the old 'Baas' was seen protruding from the door, presently followed by his body, his sternness of countenance gradually relaxing as he sidled towards the cart from whence the sounds proceeded.

The 'Vrouw,' with a 'kleina Kind' (little child) in her arms, debouched on the front 'stoep,' whilst other members of the household began to peer from different coigns of vantage, until quite a charmed circle, including the Hottentot servants and the Kaffir dogs, listened with greedy ears whilst the episcopal flute went on toot-tooting in an unconcerned manner, and to all intents unaware of the local sensation it was creating.

The ice having thus been broken, it required only the application of the flask of brandy to create a complete thaw, and a proffered 'souple' was at once accepted; and in half an hour his lordship was installed as Mynheer's guest for the night, the best things of the larder at his service, and the best room in the house for his dormitory—in spite of his host's preconceived opinion that the body of a Catholic bishop was the fixed abode of the king of fallen angels.

Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal and seat of Government, built on an extensive area, is well-watered and planted—the blue gum and willow trees, as is usual in South African towns, predominating in its arboriculture. The hedgerows are chiefly composed of briars, and in summer-time blaze with myriads of roses; and there are few residences of any pretensions without having an orchard of fruit trees, where peaches, pomegranates, apricots and grape-vines luxuriate in all profusion, with here and there a banana, or Arabian palm, peeping out, as evidence of a proximity to the tropics. Some large natural springs, a couple of miles from town, called 'The Fountains,' give a constant supply of water to the rivulets that run parallel on each side of the streets intersecting the town, which is well laid and open. The streets I found far from perfect specimens of macadamization; footpaths were unknown, and the side-ways very pretty in the day-time with their rippling water gurgling along, were extremely unpleasant on dark wet nights, as town-lighting was one of the arrangements yet to come. However, even these little drawbacks have their bright side, as the dropping into two or three sluits on the way home had the effect of after restoring sobriety to an intoxicated brain, and

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the skipping over the furrows when sober formed an invigorating exercise.

Canteens and lawyers appeared to have attained a state of plethora in Pretoria—not that I would suggest that there is any necessary connection between the two—but it is nevertheless an indisputable fact that both seemed to flourish successfully up to the date of my arrival; and I am not too sure that the tide of success had begun to ebb with the men of law, though it certainly had with the vendors of intoxicants. This sad decadence was brought about by the gradual diminution of the number of Imperial troops stationed in Pretoria, and by the departure of Commandant Ferreira and the Transvaal Horse for Basutoland, which noble army of martyrs embodied all the canteen-haunting 'dead beats' of the town to the number of some 300 consumers. Since that unhappy day the interior of the canteens had realised a proper definition of emptiness, and the visages of the proprietors had elongated to a positive danger of derangement of the lower jaw.

Having telegraphed from Wakkerstroom my inability to be up to date at Pretoria, I found my 'special wire' displayed in the columns of the *Transvaal Argus* in bold and prominent type, as follows—

### LATEST TELEGRAMS.

Bad Weather? Bad Roads?? Bad Luck????

TWO HORSES LOST, AND OTHER CASUALTIES.

WAKKERSTROOM, Nov. 6, 1880.

CHARLES DUVAL, } to { AGENT,  
Wakkerstroom, } Pretoria.

Stuck three hours out; two horses lost. Hold back, or postpone advertisements; will be a week behind.

My 'agent' was a friend, a townsman of my own, whose acquaintance I had made at the Diamond Fields, who *con amore* was acting for me at Pretoria, and whose 'bold advertisement' easily explained to the Pretorians the reason of my non-arrival—so they appeared quite willing to forgive my want of punctuality. Here let me add that in no part of Southern Africa previously visited had I met more agreeable and pleasant people, whether as private individuals in their domestic realms, or as public auditors; a general expression of opinion which, with the exception of a few individuals, I had no subsequent reason to modify.

A few days after my arrival I waited upon the Administrator



his Excellency Sir W. Owen Lanyon, who favoured me with an interview, during which he kindly discussed the Boer and other political questions. 'Sir Owen,' as he was familiarly called, a tall, dark man of unexceptionably gentlemanlike manners, held the opinion, the universal one apparently amongst persons in Transvaal authority, that the Boers would not fight; and even supposing they did, that a bloodless victory would result on the advance of the Imperial troops.

'But, your Excellency,' I ventured to contend, 'they have been the pioneers of South Africa, and may be said to have fought their way from the shores of Table Bay to the Zambesi.'

Yes, yes,' he replied, 'I grant you that; but they had only Kaffirs to deal with. They will never stand against the red-coats.'

'Well, your Excellency,' I said, 'as far as I could learn Boer sentiments on my way here, they don't seem to think very much of the foot-soldier, or "rooi baatje," as they call him, for they say he cannot ride and he cannot shoot, in both of which points they themselves excel.'

'They may say what they like, they won't stand against the red-coats,' replied Sir Owen; 'and they have held these mass meetings before, and nothing has come of them; further, our Financial Secretary's present return of collected taxes is far more satisfactory than any previous one.'

With Sir Owen's words, 'They will never stand against the red-coats,' echoing in my ears, a sentiment which, as I have said, was shared universally by all military and civil authorities, I bowed myself out of Government House, and walked down to the European Hotel just in time to learn that my friends of the Sand Spruit and Vaal River, the Marmion and Constance of real life, had arrived there, and the keen eye of mine host having penetrated the disguise of the fair one, he had notified that a change of residence or apparel would oblige, a hint immediately acted upon by the acceptance of the former alternative.

The 'rumours of war' were the talk of the dinner-table, and a general disposition to despise the possible enemy seemed to be in vogue. The mass meeting of the Boers, originally intended to have been held on the 8th of January, was suddenly summoned for the 8th of December, to determine their attitude respecting a seizure of a bullock-waggon made by the sheriff at Potchefstroom, in consequence of the refusal of its owner, one Bezuidenhout, to pay taxes claimed by the Government, which seizure had resulted in a forcible rescue of the distrained vehicle on the part of the anti-taxation sympathisers. Curiously enough, history repeated

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itself here in a most remarkable manner, for the refractory Bezuidenhout was a descendant of the Dutchman similarly named, who, by a refusal to pay taxes in the Cape Colony in 1815, succeeded in raising a revolt which ended disastrously for the insurrectionists, several of whom expiated their attempt by the hangman's rope at Slaghter's Nek, leaving the legacy of their unhappy fate to rankle in the memories of the Boer colonists even to the present time. Two companies of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Winsloe, part of a battery of Artillery and a couple of guns, had been despatched to Potchefstroom to the support of Major Clarke, the Civil Commissioner, and Commandant Raaff, the sheriff, the latter a colonial man of considerable local reputation as a leader of irregular mounted volunteers; and it was considered in Pretoria that ample means to vindicate the sheriff's authority had been taken. Meantime the ringleaders of the waggon rescue Cronjè—Bezuidenhout, and some others, had been demanded—and the Colonial Secretary, Mr. George Hudson, was despatched to the mass meeting of the Boers at a place called Paardekraal, to exchange *pourparlers* with the leaders, Paul Kruger, Pretorius, and P. J. Joubert—the acknowledged heads and mouth-pieces of the Dutch population of the Transvaal. In this waggon-travelling country it takes time to gather news, so information as to what was really transpiring was limited; and in the enjoyment of a fools' paradise, the Pretorians went about their various businesses, and only credited such news as they desired to believe, negating disagreeable intelligence by the contemptuous expression of 'yarns.' I attended a meeting of the Legislative Council, and heard one member, who certainly appeared possessed of foresight, as well as sufficient honesty to feel and courage to express his opinions, denouncing in no measured terms the system of Government and the line of policy it had adopted; and though by no means friendly to the Boers as adversaries of British rule, he evidently held pronounced opinions as to the desirability of granting representative Institutions, and the carrying out of the other promises made by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in his annexation proclamation.

The strong point of defence against the establishment of elective representative government appeared to be an opinion of the Executive that the Dutch population being in immensely numerical superiority would return members pledged to vote for the annulling of the annexation, a difficulty which required some solution, and was no doubt a rock ahead when any proposition of the kind came before the Administration. This



may or may not have been the cause, but an evident supineness and want of energy to grapple with the difficulties of the past, present, and immediate future, did strike the unprejudiced onlooker as a notable characteristic of the Transvaal Executive Council; and the debate, historically its last, I witnessed in the High Court of Pretoria, did not tend to strengthen a reverence for governing bodies in general, or Transvaal ones in particular. There is always a bright side to everything, and the would-be electors forming the auditors, and who, despite the 'Silence! silence!' of the ushers, contributed spontaneous applause to Senator White, as he metaphorically delivered his left-handers on the legislative proboscis, assembled shortly afterwards in the bar of the principal hotel, and forgot the sorrows of their unfranchised condition in the flowing bowl of soda-and-brandy at two shillings a glass, a price which made Boniface a considerable object of envy to those obliged to rest satisfied with smaller profits and slower returns.

The volunteer meeting resulted in the nucleus of a few troops and companies being formed, a mounted corps, 'The Pretoria Carabineers,' of whom I shall often subsequently have to speak, being raised under the leadership of Mr. R. H. K. D'Arcy, a former magistrate of Kimberley, and a jolly good fellow withal. The possession of something to ride was a necessity to enable volunteers to join 'D'Arcy's Horse,' as they were familiarly called; and having seven brutes 'eating their heads off' in the stable, for the sake of example to others, and feeling it a duty I owed to my countrymen in the possible hour of danger to take their part, I joined the 'Carabineers,' Fry and 'Grab' also coming forward to enrol themselves. The prevailing idea that the Boers would not fight rendered volunteering, especially in the case of the foot corps, rather farcical; and I saw one enthusiastic officer engaged three successive afternoons drilling his 'company,' consisting of from six to ten men, but never reaching the round number of a dozen. 'Pooh! pooh!' said the knowing ones; 'don't tell us; we know all about it. Didn't they hold five mass meetings before? and what came of it? Nothing but loud talk and general denunciation of the existing Government. Pooh! we've had our experiences of this kind of thing before, and you don't catch us going out to pig in tents and do night patrols in a hurry again;' and the fable of the 'Shepherd Boy and the Wolf' had yet to be enacted in Pretoria.

On the 14th December news began to reach Pretoria of a more serious character, and on the following day a meeting, convened by the Mayor, was held in the High Court, at which a number of

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well-intentioned gentlemen were desirous of being allowed to form a deputation to parley with the Boers at the gathering now in full swing at the Paardekraal. But the Jingo element howled down these more sober-minded politicians, and with visions of confiscated farms and cattle loot before their eyes, frantically yelled for guns and bayonets, martial law, and hempen necklaces. A section—I am thankful to be able to record, a very small section—of these doughty champions mooted the possibility of forming a 'Free-shot' corps for the purpose of looting cattle and farms; and one of these individuals, afterwards conspicuous by his absence from the front when fighting did take place, solicited my services, adding by way of climax to the attractions of his programme, 'I know lots of Boer farms where there's plenty of stamps;' the latter term being a delicate way of classifying the current coin of the realm. I thanked him, and gravely assured him I would think his suggestions over, and felt a considerable reaction setting in, much more favourable to the malcontent Boer than I had previously experienced; not that I was without a natural sympathy for the weak when rising against the strong, for I could not shut my eyes to the fact that there were reasons to account for the train of discontent which had now reached a point of the line where the red light of the danger-signal shed its lurid rays right across the track. And singularly enough, as though in sympathy with the generally warlike sentiments of the Pretorians, or portentous of coming events, shortly after the 'renegades meeting,' as some of the hotter spirits termed it, was held, the sky assumed a most threatening appearance—louring clouds deeply dyed in crimson and red, spread over the entire heavens, and so marked and extraordinary was this appearance, that I drew the attention of several friends to it as an ominous sign that warfare and bloodshed were at hand.

The following day was one historically interesting to the Dutch of south Africa, as it was the anniversary of the defeat of Dingaan, the great Zulu King, by the old 'Voortrekkers;' and the air was laden with disquieting rumours, and a cordon of mounted picquets kept watch around Pretoria from the sunset of its evening till the sunrise of the following morning. The mounted infantry—an improvised arm of the service—guarded the west and northern approaches, whilst D'Arcy's Horse did similar service on the east and southern sides of the town, at distances varying from a mile to a mile and a half from its centre. This was my first experience on outpost duty, and it afforded fine opportunities for an active brain to work out its varied fancies while riding alone and solitary between



the points where the mounted outposts of the nearest picquets exchanged challenges and subsequent salutations; and the grey morning light was more than acceptable to eyeballs strained with peering through the darkness of the long night which seemed as though it would never come to an end. A long weary night. The daybreak was truly a relief to a monotony only broken by the 'grand rounds,' who in order to test our vigilance on one occasion tried to ride past without replying to the usual challenge, and narrowly escaped an ounce of lead as a reward for their temerity. No news is good news, is an old saying, and nothing of importance having come in during the day, I determined to accept an invitation from Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea and his garrison officers to present 'the show' at the camp *pro bono* Tommy Atkins *et hoc genus omnes*. A large reading-room was duly prepared, and 700 people crowded into it; and the soldiers laughed and applauded, with vigorous lungs and brawny hands—happy Jacks, caring little, and probably thinking less, of the ring of guards, armed to the teeth, extended around camp and town in anticipation of a possible night attack.

At the conclusion of part number one, Colonel Gildea received a private message, and the *entr'acte* found him 'behind the scenes;' and in a few brief words he explained his reasons for leaving before the conclusion. His explanation was short, but it was pithy, for he said in a subdued voice—

'There is war! the Dutch flag was hoisted yesterday and the Republic proclaimed at Heidelberg.'

'Do you think they will attack Pretoria, Colonel?' I asked.

'No; but we will go for them,' he replied; adding, 'It is possible that we shall march at two o'clock in the morning.'

They did *not* march at two o'clock in the morning, and rumour in Pretoria had it that a somewhat stormy scene had taken place at Government House, in which diversity of opinion in military circles exhibited itself strongly on the question of what ought or ought not to be done.

The next day, 18th December, the last mail-cart arrived; the post-bags were seized by the Boers at Heidelberg, but the passengers, an Irishman named Clarke and his two daughters, intending settlers in the Transvaal, were allowed to go through unmolested. One of these young girls, with great readiness and courage, had managed to secrete the despatches for the Administrator in the bosom of her dress, and thus carried them to Pretoria, though her modesty suggested their being transferred to her hat before her arrival at Government House; and when the

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facts of how the last governmental despatches were brought to the Transvaal capital come to be known, perhaps Miss Clarke will receive the meed of praise her fidelity and bravery deserve. The story of these travellers was simple. Heidelberg was occupied by the Boers in force, was being fortified, the Republic was declared; but it awakened the people of Pretoria to the gravity of the situation, and horse and foot volunteers began to enrol with some semblance of organization and system. Defensive works progressed, stores were converted into temporary fortifications, loopholed and barricaded, private houses and public offices shared the same fate, and an earthwork was rapidly projected around the old Dutch church, in the centre of the market square. You went to consult your attorney and had to pilot your way through a labyrinth of sand-bags, and enjoyed your consultations with the pleasant play of the breezes sweeping through the loopholes of the office wall. It was Sunday, but going to church was out of the question; not but there was a large enough congregation assembled to justify a ten-parson-power exhortation, for upwards of 250 natives, clad in all sorts of indescribable garments, were at work with pick and shovel throwing up an earthen wall round the Dutch conventicle, and with the Engineers 'bossing' them up, rapidly converting the house of prayer into the service of that fallen angel to whose machinations are attributed all the evils of this world—and war, I take it, may be included in the category. On they came—the Kaffirs, not the Boers—bearing bricks, barrels, sand-bags, boxes, etc., and minute by minute the wall rose, the barrier became stronger; and the old Dutch church in the centre looked quietly down at the preparations made to convert its parishioners to a more generous appreciation of the blessings of civilization as purveyed by the mitrailleuse and Martini Henry. Everyone who had been served with arms and ammunition was notified to sleep with his rifle by his side, and his bandolier of cartridges around him. The authorities were compelled to exercise the wisdom of discretion in the giving out of weapons of defence, as so many of the inhabitants were connected in some way with the outside Boers that they were allies only in name, and their loyalty was simply secured by fears for the success of their relatives and friends.

The same day that the last mail-cart arrived (the 18th December), from which date our communications might be said to be entirely cut off, the mounted volunteers were notified to parade at our usual ground—the open space opposite Jellalabad Villas—the name of a Government office—at seven in the evening. The



Carabineers' mustered pretty strong at the trysting place, and, drawn up in line were severally asked if they wished to go on special service at one o'clock in the morning or not? I think I am correct in saying that there was scarcely a negative answer, and receiving our instructions to be fully armed, and by one o'clock in the morning to assemble at Fort Royal—a small bastion in the open ground, commanding the 'poort' or entrance to Pretoria from the Potcheffstroom Road—we were dismissed. Each man turned in, clothed, armed, booted and spurred, to catch a few hours' sleep, and towards one o'clock received a cautious awakening, and saddling up as best we could in the dark, repaired to the appointed rendezvous. On reaching the ground at the right of Fort Royal, the shadowy forms of the Mounted Infantry and 'Carabineers' already arrived were visible, drawn up in line, and the occasional jingling of a scabbard or riding about of a knot of officers a little in front alone denoted that any movement was anticipated. After the preliminaries were settled amongst the officers in command the reconnaissance commenced, the videttes and advanced guard being formed by 'Carabineers,' followed by Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea and staff, with the Mounted Infantry as reserve. The night was pitchy in darkness, and being thrown out as a flanking scout at a couple of hundred yards to the left of the column was a situation I found of anything but an enviable kind—an opinion which will be better understood and appreciated when the formation of the country is explained: consisting of mountain ridge, kopjes, stones, large, small, and shingly; holes bored by ant-bears, and dangerous to a degree where untrained horses are concerned; sudden dips in the ground, equally sudden rises; and the only illumination to light the way a few bear-eyed stars, which sometimes feebly struggled through the mantle of dark cloud in which they were generally smothered.

On we went, and the reality of war and its consequences had ample time to secure a hold on the mind; and with the senses drawn to a tension through the impossibility of seeing anything around beyond a radius of a dozen yards, the imagination began to transform everything, whether bush, or stone, or tree, into an enemy's scout. Many a time and oft I gripped my carbine-stock all the faster, my breath held, and the bandolier sought wherein lay the friendly cartridge, whose aid would be called into play in the event of any of my suppositions proving at last correct.

Having been detached with four others as a special patrol, we severed from the column and moved off to the left, and shortly heard the sound of horses approaching. The riders were

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challenged, but gave no reply; and slipping the brass tubes of death into the breeches of our Martinis, we stood ready to fire the moment the word was given, each man covering as well as he could the direction from whence the sounds appeared to come. A second challenge evoked an unintelligible reply, and a third, with the emphatic statement that further refusal to stand would be followed by an order to fire, halted the party, who proved to be members of our own corps, who had been upon a scouting expedition. Their reticence to reply and disposition to advance, despite all challenges, might have cost them dearly, the more so when dealing with untrained soldiers on their first patrol.

After this episode we rode after the column, and found a picquet of the 94th Mounted Infantry occupying a deserted house near a small river. Oh, glorious stream! All the teetotal lectures combined; all that Good Templar has ever preached; all that the *Alliance* has ever published in praise of the virtues of water, was nothing to the appreciation of our parched palates when we dismounted from our steeds, and lying at full length on the banks of the 'Spruit,' sucked in a full and unstinted draught of the pure, cold liquid rippling pleasantly along.

On rejoining our comrades a forward move was made, and while reconnoitring a 'laager,' where we had received intelligence of the enemy having been seen, our advanced guard came suddenly upon a party of Boers patrolling the neighbourhood. Whiz! whish! and a couple of bullets passed harmlessly over our heads; and Colonel Gildea, riding forward, secured one of the party just as he was in the act of raising his rifle to fire, his friends clearing off as fast as their chargers could carry them.

The Colonel stuck to his man, and when we came to view our prize by the light of day, a singular-looking object he was.

He certainly did not impress you as much calculated to strike terror by his martial air, for with the exception of an uncommonly good rifle, he had nothing military or soldier-like about him.

A poor, miserable-looking expression of face, calf-like in its simplicity, and a figure spare even to leanness, were his chief physical characteristics. But if physically he failed to give you the idea of a soldier, how much more did he in apparel! Shade of Murat! whose gallant trappings and flying hussar-jacket were seen to the fore when the light horsemen of the 'Old Guard' charged over many a well-fought field in the glorious days of Bonaparte, had you but gazed upon the first of the enemy's dragoons who fell into our hands on this auspicious morning near Pretoria, you surely would have accorded him the palm for



simplicity of uniform! Can I trust myself to describe his gorgeous trappings and apparel? I will, but gently, and not let your eyes, O reader, in imagination be blinded by the splendour it shall be mine to describe. His head, surmounted by what is known as a Dopper hat—namely, a black cloth steeple-crowned edifice, with a brim not less than seven inches deep and turned up with green—commenced him; some kind of dark mixture coat with side-pockets, constituted his middle; while a pair of corduroy breeches and black-leather knickerbockers, the latter fastened with the approved iron spring, finished him. No, not finished him, for I have forgotten perhaps the most striking feature in the entire *tout ensemble*—his ‘goggles,’ for that, and no other term that I am acquainted with so accurately describes the extraordinary pair of spectacles worn by this Nimrod of the Transvaal. Placing him between two ‘Carabineers’ at the head of the column, we marched triumphantly back to camp, our prisoner, who looked as though he anticipated immediate execution, being duly paraded in front; and as the white tents of the military shone out against the background of the Magaliesberg range, the conclusion was generally come to that the capture of even this eccentric-looking and valuable prize went but a short distance in the matter of repayment for so many hours’ loss of sleep and expenditure of physical exertion. In fact, some of the younger and consequently more irreverent ‘Carabineers’ were heard to mutter, ‘Well, it’s hard lines spending the whole night in taking a blind Boer, and we suppose we shouldn’t have got him if he could have seen his way out of it.’ ‘Boys will be boys,’ says the adage; and ‘Old men will be talking,’ says Shakespeare; and although I cannot see how either of these propositions affects my narrative, I suppose they will come in useful enough to enable me to bring to a conclusion somehow the experiences of my first patrol.

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sniff the battle from afar. I sold three of my horses to a Government contractor immediately I heard that 'commandeering' was ordered. 'Commandeering' is a South African term which refers to the taking over, or otherwise seizing, with or without payment or acknowledgment, in the name of the governing body, any and every article deemed necessary to the successful carrying on of warfare. The contractor took my three horses, and they did their duty as the bearers of those somewhat nondescript and anomalous warriors, the Mounted Infantry, which some persons might deem related to that historic corps the 'Horse Marines.'



Issuing the Rations.

Mounted Infantry, however, will probably be much more heard of should grim war again select South Africa as his battle-ground, and had such an arm been attached in sufficiently proportionate numbers to the column of the 94th, the story of defeat and destruction at 'Bronkhorst Spruit' might have remained unwritten.

Matters had now become really serious in Pretoria, and as I held a roving commission as correspondent to some leading home journals, it struck me that a brilliant opportunity had arrived to



people, he received this remarkable piece of ordnance as a token of amity from the old Kaiser Wilhelm, Emperor of Germany. It was brought to Africa, landed at Delagoa Bay, and dragged by oxen through that dangerous strip of country known as the Tsetse-fly belt. Ox-team after ox-team were sacrificed in the endeavour to bring it home to the Transvaal capital; the bones of the brawny bullocks bleaching the road, and pointing out the track of the mitrailleuse as though its contents had been belched out with fire and smoke, leaving a trail of desolation behind it.



The Garrison Office, Commandants and Staff.

It seemed the grimmest of irony to now behold its twenty-five eyes peering over a sand-bag embrasure, ready to shatter and splinter the very men who had toiled and moiled in bringing it to where it was, and who in all probability had hailed its arrival with the warmest congratulations.

A circular laager, occupied principally by married men and their families, and formed by a ring of bullock-waggons, inside which tents were pitched and sheds erected, was placed at the western wing of the camp; a chain of sentries from the Civil

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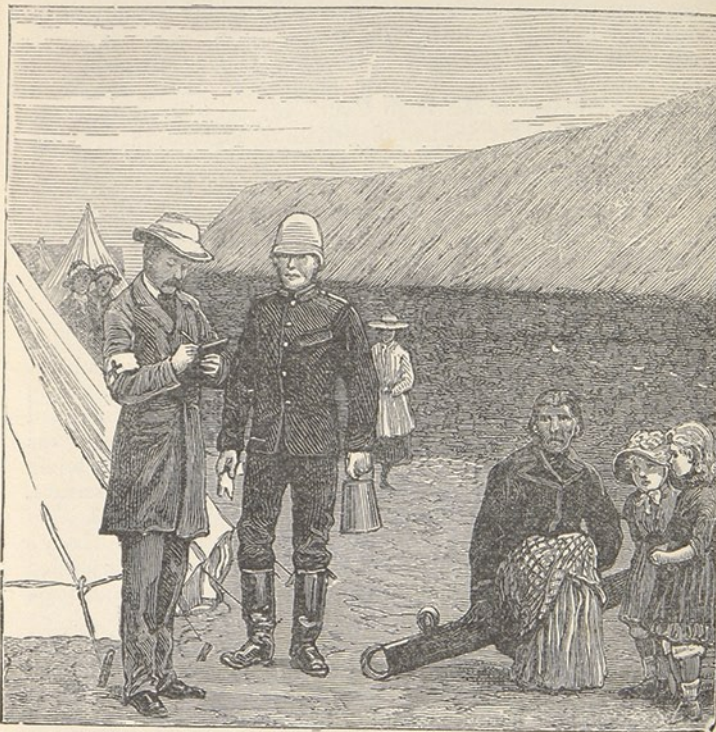
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which the arming of a number of Foot Volunteers with short carbines, and the Pretoria Carabineers and Nourse's Horse, both mounted forces, with long Martini rifles, was an instance.

A short walk brought me from the camp to Fort Royal, and there I found Captain Campbell—his men hard at work improving their defences. The men were cutting a trench, and throwing up



The Doctor going his Rounds.

the spadefuls of earth as only the Britisher can.

'Well, boys, how are you getting on?'

'Well,' said one fellow 'we've heard a good deal about gold in the Transvaal, but although we dig plenty, we don't seem to get much of it!'

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## CHAPTER XXV.

THE BOER INVESTMENT—FIRST BRUSH WITH THE ENEMY AT PRETORIA—SKIRMISH AT SPRINGHAASFONTEIN—MORE WEATHER—THE DESERTED VILLAGE—NEW YEAR'S EVE—CAMP-LIFE—INCIDENTS—SORTIE FROM PRETORIA—CAPTURE OF ZWARTKOPJE LAAGER.

THE enemy's plan of investing Pretoria was novel and effective, and consisted of a series of 'laagers,' or roughly-fortified places, selected near farms in the vicinity of roads leading to the town. Most of these 'laagers' were commanded by kopjes and krantzies, which were roughness itself, and possessed all the elements necessary for strong defensive positions without any assistance from the hand of man. They formed a complete ring at various distances, from three to ten miles round the town, patrolling-parties moving constantly from one to the other, a system of communication being kept up by signal-fires, so that in the event of any particular one of these positions being attacked, reinforcements could be hurried from the others to assist in its defence; or to make demonstrations on the flanks and rear of the attacking party.

On the 28th of December, about nine in the morning, intelligence came into camp that Nourse and a patrol-party of his men were engaged with the Boers near the Six-mile Spruit; so I lost no time in saddling up my horse and riding out to be in at the first brush with the enemy near Pretoria. About a mile outside of the camp I met one of D'Arcy's Carabineers, bringing in a wounded man, who, sitting behind on the crupper of the horse, was more than thankful for a nip of brandy I administered to him. Pushing on, I overtook a strong party of the Pretoria Carabineers going out as supports; and almost at the same time another evidence that blood-letting was going on passed in the shape of another brace of men on one steed—the unwounded one of whom called out:

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I promised not to forget him and the fact as stated, and physicked his patient, who was shot through the shoulder with another little drop of 'Three Star.'

The Carabineers had meanwhile extended in the open Veld, and were cautiously advancing, when in a little time we met Nourse's men leisurely returning—the skirmish being over, the enemy having withdrawn. A reconnaissance in force, accompanied by two seven-pounder guns, to the place where this skirmish had taken place, was decided upon, and half-past one o'clock in the morning saw the Garrison Square fully occupied by the forces selected to go out, and who appeared tolerably happy in the hope of being permitted to purvey an early allowance of gruel to the Boers outside. The entire force, which included the Carabineers, Nourse's Horse, Mounted Infantry, a couple of companies of Scots Fusiliers, some Royal Artillery, with a brace of seven-pounders, moved out, commanded by Colonel Gildea, the Mounted Volunteers scouting in advance.

We reached the Six-mile Spruit, or rather an eminence commanding it, at daybreak; the guns were then ordered up, and the Fusiliers distributed themselves amongst the stones and clumps of bush around.

Quick to the word of command, up came the artillery officer and his popguns, and pretty little playthings they proved themselves, and evidently interested a number of Boers, discoverable in the grey dawning light on a ridge about 2,500 yards away; who, after three or four shells had been playfully tossed to them, rode rapidly away to a farm known as the 'Red House,' on their left. The Carabineers, still preserving their extended order, now crowned the vacated brow, and moved towards the farm—a double belt of trees intervening between it, and the advancing troopers.

Leaving one gun on the heights above the spruit, the Colonel pushed on with the other, some infantry and Nourse's Horse, through the stream, and secured a position much nearer the farmhouse, at which we forwarded another brace of shells. One of these appeared to drop into the laager, or more probably one of the cattle-kraals; for the Boers were seen driving out the cattle in hot haste to preserve their carcasses for the less wholesale system of butchery peculiar to their more economical ideas of household management. The Mounted Volunteers had meanwhile occupied the belt of bush, and a portion of them were working forward to right and left of the farm. The Colonel was burning to support the mounted men and attack the place, but his instruc-



tions having been defined, and his operations limited, he was compelled to merely watch the course of things and send a few screeching shells at the laagers and farm-buildings.

'Those cattle would be very useful in Pretoria, Colonel,' said Mr. Brooks, one of the Legislative Council, who had accompanied the staff on the expedition. 'Shall I tell D'Arcy to try and take them?'

'Yes; if he can do so without attacking the house and laager—' replied the Colonel.

A military adventurer who had come out as a 'free shot,' hearing these remarks, galloped away to the front and told D'Arcy to take the cattle; and Mr. Brooks, slinging his double-barrelled rifle behind him, trotted down the slope and arrived in time to find the gallant Captain, like Achilles, wounded in the heel, and several of his men and horses also injured, he having made a dash for the cattle-kraal, and caught it hotly from the Boers behind the loopholed walls of the laagers and farm out-buildings.

The Carabineers from the strip of bush kept up a sputtering fire, returned in an equally desultory manner by the Boers, until both parties seemed to tire of the amusement, and with the exception of an occasional shot now and then at intervals, it almost ceased. An ambulance was sent down for D'Arcy and one of his troopers, a boy of sixteen, who had also been wounded in the heel, after exhibiting great pluck and coolness. I rode round to the ambulance to see D'Arcy. He had received a painful and ugly wound in the foot, and his services from that hour were lost to Pretoria.

We re-crossed the spruit, and on the other side met Sir Owen Lanyon and a part of the Executive Council Brigade, the latter looking very determined and ferocious, double-barrelled rifles being in vogue, and bandoliers with apparently unlimited ammunition supplies *de rigueur*. The Coloured Intelligence Department was there also, and seemed to have been having a good time in the poultry-yard of some neighbouring Dutchman; and had the Boer who owned them been there to count his ducks and chickens, he would have had considerable exercise in numeration.

By noon we were all back in camp, and concluded the day by the enjoyment of yet another agreeable weather experience, even worse than that of Christmas Eve, and the following morning displayed a cheerful picture of tents blown down, and beds, bedding, wearing apparel and camp residents out in the sun to dry.

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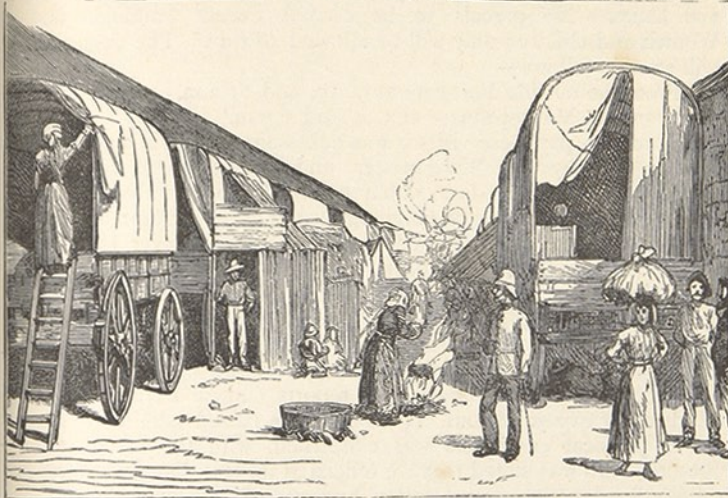
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Despite all these annoyances, the order which prevailed throughout the camp was a matter for great congratulation ; and where soldiers and civilians, the latter consisted of men, women, and children, the behaviour of the former was exceptionally good.

Foraging expeditions to farms in the neighbourhood of Pretoria, reconnaissances of positions and skirmishes with small parties of the enemy, were now matters of daily occurrence.

It was generally conceded that the enemy's patrolling and scouting was as well done as the best troops in the world could



A Waggon Alley.

have done it, and no intelligence from outside of a reliable or direct character was allowed to find its way through the charmed circle of investment—the 'waacht,' or watch, being kept night and day, and, as we afterwards learned, extending down to every river-drift and approach to the Transvaal, as far as the borders of Griqualand West.

I rode into the now deserted village of Pretoria a few days after the new year had been ushered in ; and its market square empty and tenantless, its shops closed, its hotels with shutters up, and Provost-Marshall's notices contravening the sale of liquors



nailed thereon, the half-finished laager surrounding its church in the centre—all marked the contrast to that busiest of scenes it last presented, when its populace and volunteers assembled to hear the declaration of martial law.

In order that persons resident in camp should not altogether abstract their attention from their household gods in the adjacent town, a notice was published by order of the Garrison-Adjutant in the *News of the Camp*, and posted on the notice-board, to the following effect—

‘Ox-waggons will run daily between the fort and the town for the convenience of families desirous of visiting their houses for a few hours. No parcels to be carried except hand-parcels. Women and children only will be allowed to ride. The waggons will start as follows—

‘From the outside Fort-gate at 9, 10, and 11 a.m.

‘From the Market-square at 3, 4, and 5 p.m.’

In order to pay these visits it was necessary to obtain a printed pass, signed by the Ward-master and countersigned by the Garrison-Adjutant, a duty which eventually became not only monotonous but decidedly fatiguing to the latter gallant officer, who no doubt often cursed the fates that he ever learned to write, or that he had not been christened Tom Smith or Bill Jones, instead of ‘Spencer F. Chichester, which with Lieutenant and Adjutant, R.S.F., Garrison-Adjutant, Pretoria,’ added, he possibly wrote twenty thousand times during the war. The work of the Garrison Office was pretty heavy, and the way he slashed through passes, requisitions, and reports, might have made a handwriting expert envious. He might have paired admirably, as far as physical endurance was concerned, with the Bishop of Pretoria, who was stated to have officiated no less than five times on one Sunday, in camp, laager, and redoubt, despite the fact that his hearers were few, and their spiritual enthusiasm somewhat dormant. However, his lordship deserved much praise for the stalwart energy of his piety; and it was said that he carried through a midnight service on New Year’s Eve successfully, despite the fact that the band and pipers of the Scots Fusiliers in the square immediately adjoining were ushering in ‘Eighteen hundred and eighty-one’ with all the musical ardour of brazen notes and skirling pipes, effecting serious collisions of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ with the ‘Nunc Dimittis,’ the first part of the former melody being repeated four times in succession, suggesting that ‘Hogmanay Nicht’ was not being celebrated without other stimulating influences besides those of Gaelic enthusiasm.



A foraging expedition was successfully carried out to a farm called 'The Willows,' some miles to the east of Pretoria, resulting in thirteen waggons of produce. The day was hot, and the party of men on a look-out hill-top between the farm and the camp, and who were keeping up a conversation with the latter by means of flag-signals, expressed considerable gratification when they received instructions to announce that the expedition had been successful, and on the road back.

These instructions I personally brought to them, and the prospect of coming down shortly from an exposed position, with no shelter and empty water-bottles, was hailed with loud acclaim, and a cheer given for the successful foragers.

We just returned to camp in time to witness the chief officer of Transport forcibly ejecting from his tent the regimental ram—a patriarch of the Southdown species, who was generally marched at the head of the Scots Fusiliers when on parade. The heat of the weather had evidently oppressed his ramship, and the tent of 'the Major' seemed to offer all the inducements of shade and luxurious ease, so in he went, and quietly disposed himself on the official shakedown; and great was the consternation, and both loud and deep the imprecations, of its owner when he discovered his bed thus occupied. And much that ancient mutton rued the fact that Transport officers carry long and heavy riding boots on sinewy and supple limbs; and he looked as though he was repenting his transgressions, and seeking relief for his bruised spirit when, a few hours later, he was seen rubbing his quarters against the wheel of one of the nine-pounders at the west of the Garrison Square.

An event took place at this time which went to prove that all who had taken refuge under the British flag were not entirely loyal to its defence. It was the loss of upwards of seventy head of cattle. The authorities placed in the position of pound-master a person who, to use the mildest term, might be reasonably suspected of strong leanings to the side of the Boers; and though warned several times of this fact, with that superior wisdom, born of official tenacity, which refuses to admit an error, they persisted in retaining his services. The pound-kraal was a large enclosure, a couple of hundred yards below the camp of the Carabineers, and had been intended for a vegetable-garden for the garrison. It was enclosed with strong wire-fencing, and was the nightly receptacle of a large quantity of oxen, the meat supply of Pretoria and its defenders. During the night the twenty-one outer guards and ring of sentries were alarmed with the bellowing of the animals, who seemed to have burst the bonds of the pound-kraal, and



were stampeding over the Veld. Daylight showed that the wire-fencing had been deliberately cut in several places; and on further examination it was found that seventy head of cattle were missing. The pound-master was dismissed, then arrested by the Provost-Marshal, and eventually released; the engineers built a brick wall round the pound, the guards were doubled, reliable pound-masters appointed, and in fact everything done that should have been done before—all of which failed to bring back the seventy head of the African bovines, a loss which might have been severely felt had the investment of Pretoria been prolonged an additional month beyond the time it lasted.

The first birth took place in camp a few days after New Year's Day, by which a Mr. Strauss became a happy father; and the notice of the event was duly heralded in the *News of the Camp*, under the title of 'New Music—The Wail of the Infant, by Strauss.'

On the 6th of January, at two in the morning, a column left the camp, consisting of Carabineers, under Captain Sanctuary—poor D'Arcy, the Commandant, having had to relinquish the command through his wound; Nourse's Horse, under Captain A. W. Sampson, a fine young colonial, and who now commanded the 'blue Puggarees' in the place of Nourse, who was invalided; the 94th Mounted Infantry, under Lieutenant O'Grady; a couple of companies of the Royal Scots Fusiliers; about eighty men of the Pretoria Rifles (Foot Volunteers); some Engineers, and a nine-pounder gun.

As usual, we assembled in the Garrison Square, and having ridden up to Colonel Gildea's quarters, I found him enveloped in a long riding cloak, just ready to start.

'Will you have a cup of tea?' he asked.

Replying to his thoughtful suggestion that I should be only too glad to eliminate the sleep from my eyes that my early rising, search for my horse, and the operation of saddling him up had failed in doing, I availed myself of his morning hospitality; and the fragrant beverage of the Chinaman drove some of the film from my eyesight, and cobwebs from my half-awakened brain.

Thinking it probable that serious work was contemplated, I jammed one of my holsters with a tin of Oxford sausage, and a soda-water bottle full of brandy, and the other contained half a dozen biscuits, a case of bullets, and a handsome Rigby revolver, of the newest pattern and latest improvements; so I felt that I was fairly victualled and not badly garrisoned. My Westley-Richards carbine I left in the waggon, and in its place I slung

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round my shoulders a field telescope and pair of glasses, and thus equipped followed the Colonel to the square where the column was forming.

I then became acquainted with our destination, which, till then had been kept secret, and also the Colonel's plan of action. The position to be attacked was a laager some ten miles from Pretoria, erected in the rear of a rugged little mountain called the Zwartkopje (Black Hill), and immediately adjoining a farm previously occupied by a Mr. Cockcroft, who had left his place and sought asylum beneath the English flag in Pretoria. It was the Colonel's intention, by sending the Carabineers forward by a road to the left, to secure a position on the farther side of the laager, and thus prevent the escape of its occupants in the event of his attack being successful.

We moved from the camp and through the town of Pretoria, and got well out on the 'Veld' road, the Carabineers leading with their scouts well ahead, and the Mounted Infantry following in their wake, the nine-pounder gun and mule-waggon, with Infantry and Foot Volunteers, trailing along behind them, the officers of Transport 'bossing' up the mule drivers, to 'keep the touch' of the column. The Colonel rode down to the right, accompanied by the Adjutant and his escort. Not hearing the tramp of the column immediately after us, I rode back, and presently discovered them following the Carabineers, who were working off to the road on the left, and had the Mounted Infantry and whole column in their wake. A few words of explanation with Lieutenant O'Grady, the officer commanding the Mounted Infantry, had the desired effect of putting them on the right track.

And now the difficulty arose of finding the Colonel and escort, who were not to be heard, and certainly on this darkest of nights were not to be seen. He must be down to the right was generally conceded, and on we went, leading the column through the pitchy darkness, now floundering into holes, now rising suddenly over ant-hills, or occasionally becoming dead-locked by boulder-stones, whose acquaintance was made too late to be avoided; and after this experience of 'trekking' over the 'Veld,' the indifferent path that did duty for a road to Middleburg was hailed with something akin to a strong sense of relief when at last we did strike into it. In about half an hour's time we discovered the Colonel and escort, who had halted for the arrival of the troops; and after some delay in crossing a few boggy patches and drifts of spruits, shortly before daybreak the head of



the column halted at 'The Willows,' the farm from whence we had successfully foraged the day before.

As morning dawned and the sun began to shake himself up, the Carabineers could be seen riding boldly forward to take up the position previously arranged for them. Our halting-time was short; long enough, however, to secure a couple of bundles of forage for my horse, which, poor brute, had not much opportunity for subsequent gastronomic enjoyments. Presently a few puffs of white smoke, gradually extending into a broken circle, indicated that the Carabineers were engaged, and no time was lost in making a forward movement. Philosophers may write, prelates may argue, and poets may sing of the blessings of peace, but that man is a fighting animal there is no gainsaying; and the sight of these distant puffs of smoke, so surely indicating that our comrades had commenced the engagement, acted like a spur on the main body, who came clattering down as fast as horses and mule-waggons could carry them—the lucky mounted fellows dashing ahead, and reaching the ground before their less fortunate brethren of the foot corps, who had to content themselves on their waggons and with the pace of their mules, who, however, never travelled faster than over the couple of miles that intervened between 'The Willows' and the Zwartkopje. Colonel Gildea rode down to the right of the kopje, and the nine-pounder and artillery, protected by a company of infantry with mounted ditto in reserve, took up a position from whence a few shells were tossed at the top of the little rugged mound where the puffs of smoke were visible. A party of mounted men were seen advancing towards this little kopje, and an order was heard to 'give them a shell;' and the artillery responded by skying one at them, which fortunately burst in mid-air high over their heads.

While the gun was being re-loaded and depressed to secure the range for a second shot, I rode down in front, dismounted, and, steadying my field-glass on my horse's saddle, discovered by its aid that the mounted enemy we were endeavouring to decimate were none other than a troop of the Pretoria Carabineers, and whose slouched hats and somewhat irregular formation made it an easy matter to mistake them for Boers at the distance and in the deceptive morning light.

It did not take me many seconds to jump on to my horse and gallop back with this striking piece of intelligence; and I was not an instant too soon, for they were all ready, the gunner waiting the order to fire, and the sergeant-major serenely observing the proper sighting of the nine-pounder for the benefit of 'our boys' in the

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distance. I confess I felt a little warmed up, and roared out, 'Stop—don't fire !' with rather more authority of tone than the fact of being an attaché to the Commandant's staff might possibly warrant ; but when the explanation followed that we had got our own men as targets, I venture to believe that I was heartily forgiven. An outcome of this incident was that during the remainder of the war the Carabineers and Nourse's Horse carried red and blue flags respectively, to denote their whereabouts in the field.

I immediately reported the occurrence to the Colonel, who ordered the gun to be trained on the Zwartkopje, which we now began to discover was the real place of defence, and which looked from the rocks and shrubs by which it was covered, and the thick orchard in the rear at its base, an ugly nut to crack even to minds entirely ignorant of military tactics and the art of attack and defence. Two companies of the Scots Fusiliers extended in skirmishing order, and attacked the left front face of the kopje ; and Captain Sampson, with some of Nourse's men, dismounted, and thirty or forty of the Foot Volunteers worked up to the left, where the orchard and farm-house was situated. A small river almost encircled the base of the kopje, forming a natural moat around this little fortress of nature ; and the power of selection was evidently discreetly used when Cockcroft's farm was chosen as one of the circle of laagers investing Pretoria. The artillery played away, but the cover afforded by the kopje was too good to admit of the fire being effectual ; and the Boers kept up a fairly spirited reply from their points of vantage. The Colonel, who was all a fighting man, and whose blood was getting warmer the longer the attack lasted, rode down to within 400 yards of the base of the kopje ; and following him, we came in for a fair share of attention from the marksmen above. In my unsophisticated heart I was desirous of not only preserving the life of the commanding officer, but the fact that my wife might at any moment become a widow was impressing itself upon me, and I ventured to mildly intimate that we were getting fairly into the line of fire.

'Oh, hang the line of fire !' replied the Colonel. 'Tell those Foot Volunteers to get forward ;' a reference to some half-dozen gentlemen who evidently did not relish lead supplied in small or large quantities—one of whom seemed to have rather vague ideas as to which was the barrel and which the stock of his rifle.

While 'bossing' up some of these stragglers, the shots from the laager became lively, and being much closer, were consequently



more interesting. It has quite a musical sound, that singing of a bullet; and as long as you can hear it making music, you may rest satisfied that it is not the particular one that has your corporeal frame destined as its billet. It is when it comes past you with a 'whit-sch,' that you may deem your escape a lucky one, and that your visitor has been quite close enough to have enabled him to drop his card into your letter-box.

Having stirred up the stragglers, I rode up to where the gun was posted, and learned that a white flag had been reported, as having been hoisted on the left summit of the kopje, and that the Colonel, accompanied by Mr. Brooks and his mounted orderlies, had gone down to inquire the nature of the parley. So I rode after them as fast as my nag could carry me. The bugler had sounded the call to cease firing, which was immediately obeyed by the attacking Fusiliers and Artillery; but the Foot Volunteers on the other side of the kopje evidently did not understand its meaning, nor did the Carabineers on the mounds in the open, as both kept up a desultory fire—the former in the orchard, and the latter at a number of Boers who were riding away from the laager, and who probably were taking advantage of the flag being hoisted to make good their escape from a position that was evidently becoming positively sultry in its warmth.

There was an apparent lull on the left face of the kopje as I rode down to the edge of the river, and, under partial cover from its bank, worked my horse round to near the drift, or ford, where the Colonel had halted, Mr. Brooks some distance behind, and a lance-corporal, named Burns, advancing with a white handkerchief tied to the head of a lance he carried. I could not discover at this time any white flag visible on the left side of the kopje, and felt somewhat anxious as Burns boldly advanced and called out in Dutch to the Boers thereon to 'Uit komm and praat' ('Come out and speak'). They didn't come out, but they spoke with a vengeance, answering by a discharge of several shots at the flagbearer, followed by an additional contribution for the benefit of the Colonel and the rest of us. They fortunately missed everyone, an evidence that at close range the Boer is not so steady a shot as at longer distances. I jumped my horse into the river, and taking cover from its farther bank, urged him through the stream until a foothold offered at a small cattle-drift, and, gaining the open, rejoined the Colonel, who, somewhat disgusted at so nearly being the victim of what looked like downright treachery, had 'let slip the dogs of war' again, and given the order to the Fusiliers to advance.

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The cordon was now being tightly drawn round the kopje, by the Fusiliers on the one side, and the Volunteers on the other; and it was evident that those in possession were unmounted men, as their lucky comrades who owned chargers had made good their escape during the temporary lull in the action. Those remaining still kept up a dogged resistance, and the Colonel, whose patience was rapidly ebbing, gave the word to charge, the left wing of the Fusiliers having now touched the right one of the Volunteers. The charge was then sounded, and no sooner did the brazen notes of the bugle ring out, than the steel bayonets were seen glittering in the sun, and the Fusiliers advancing to the attack, their red coats showing in bold relief against the background of green; and it was at this juncture they suffered the chief loss they sustained. The sight of the cold steel appeared to have a determinate effect on the wavering opinions of the defenders of the kopje, for again a white emblem was unmistakably hoisted, and the order to 'Cease fire!' sounded by our buglers.

The Colonel rode down this time to the drift at the back of the kopje and close to the farmhouse, the orchard affording cover in case of a renewal of his previous experience, and I kept close by his side; and as we crossed the drift, I could not refrain from saying:

'Take care they don't play us the same trick again, Colonel.'

But the Colonel was on guard this time, and planted some Foot Volunteers in the outbuildings of the farmhouse, some Engineers in a little hut farther on, and then giving a Captain of the Foot Volunteers the word to advance with a file of his men, we debouched into the open space in front of the farmstead, and there in full view we saw the waggons of the enemy, their oxen kraaled, and presently a spokesman from the party above descending with a very soiled white rag in his hand—the emblem of peace, but scarcely of purity.

They are certainly a most curious people, these Transvaal Dutch. Down came 'Mynheer,' without the smallest symptom of feeling of any kind, either fear, sorrow, regret, or dislike, and extending a brawny and not too clean paw to the Colonel commanding, addressed him as 'Kapitan' (Captain), and asked him in Dutch 'How he was?' A young Pretorian, Mr. Lys, who interpreted for the Colonel, interrogated the envoy, a number of other Boers showing themselves unarmed on the kopje. We ascended their little stronghold, and saw the red jackets of the Fusiliers crowning the ridge, having come up from the other side.



The first thing that attracted my attention was a young Boer, evidently mortally wounded, and struggling in the agony of his death throes, so I lifted his head, and poured a little brandy down his throat; but he was beyond the power of all human aid, and in a few minutes his pain was over. He had his cartridges in a little leathern military pouch, all dabbled with his life's blood, and I loosened it from his belt to find that it had belonged to one of the 94th Regiment, and had in all probability been taken at the Honde River; so truly in this individual case Bronkhorst Spruit had been avenged. Another fine young Boer, broad-chested and powerful, was lying over a piece of boulder-stone just as he had fallen, a smile on his face and a bullet in his brain; and the excitement of the engagement over, I freely confess I sickened to see useful human lives sacrificed in a struggle which ought never to have taken place. The Boer Commandant, a big coarse man named Hans Botha, was lying severely wounded in no less than five places; his white shirt, to which he had stripped himself to fight more freely it is to be presumed, was bathed crimson with his blood, and his chances of recovery were reckoned small and few. Some men are like cats—you cannot kill them; and the Boer Commandant of the Zwartkopje Laager still lives to tell the story of the day when the 'rooi baatjes' mangled him with shot and shell. It was said that this man distinguished himself as a marksman in the attack on the 94th at Bronkhorst Spruit, never firing a shot without the result of killing or wounding his man. Gasping, faint, and groaning with pain, he now had an opportunity of feeling some of those pangs he little more than a fortnight before had been so instrumental in inflicting on the unsuspecting 94th fellows as they marched along to their untoward fate.

As we anticipated they were horseless as were their comrades who were killed and wounded on the kopje, all the mounted men having cleared out when the results of the action began to look ominous; and from what we then learned there had been a division of sentiment when the first flag of truce was exhibited, as to whether they should or should not surrender, their Commandant, though severely wounded desiring to fight to the last. The Engineers now blew up with dynamite some six or seven Boer waggons, wasting fully an hour in the operation, and the oxen were yoked into four others; and with the wounded and prisoners we moved over the river to find our ambulances full, and the doctors busy at work attending to the wounded, of which we had a good many; the Fusiliers in their 'advance' and 'charge' having suffered the most. Two young Carabineers were killed,



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*A Show Through Southern Africa.*

Boer Prisoners captured at the Zwartkopje.

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and a third met with his death-wound a little later; several were wounded more or less severely; and presently I met Captain Sampson, with a great hole in his throat and a bullet in his shoulder.

'Why don't you go to an ambulance, captain?' said I.

'Oh, I'm all right,' he replied; 'give me a little help to get on my horse, as I can't use my arm;' and the brave fellow refused all assistance until Nature asserted herself, and absolute fainting being imminent, he consented to sit on the back of an ambulance-waggon.

'Tell Colonel Gildea,' said Sampson, 'that one of his men behaved uncommonly well, and helped me out under a severe fire when I was wounded;' and making little of his wounds, he turned and tried to cheer up the occupants of the ambulance, some of whom were not as badly injured as himself.

These young Colonial men possess the right stuff from which to construct soldiers. Combativeness is phrenologically prominent in South African youth, and a little experience soon polishes up their fighting qualities to the glossiest smoothness. Nor must the British soldier be forgotten, for he takes his punishment as well as any man in the world; and to see Tommy Atkins smoking his pipe, with the surgeon probing his leg for a bullet, is a sight not to be forgotten.

By ten o'clock the column was formed for the return to Pretoria; the rear covered by the Carabineers. No sooner had we started on the return journey when a dropping fire was heard in the rear, the mounted Boers, reinforced by others from the laagers adjoining, having returned to the devastated Zwartkopje, and inflamed with the sight of their waggons destroyed, were determined to have a parting shot at us. The Carabineers kept them well in hand; but the oxen in the waggons made our progress slow in the extreme, and at one time I thought we would certainly be surrounded, as the enemy showed on the right and left rear, a long strip of mountain to our left flank was seen to be occupied by them, and dropping shots at long range were continuously blazed away at us. A rocket battery opened, a company of Fusiliers were thrown out in skirmishing order, an order was given to hurry up the waggons and form a 'laager;' and the Transport officers had a lively time trying to keep the mule-waggoneers in hand, and not succeeding very brilliantly in their endeavours. A party of 100 mounted Boers were seen riding hard towards a 'poort' that opened on our road back; but they did not occupy it, and at four in the afternoon we sighted the town



and camp of Pretoria, most of us pretty well done up. Having been out from 1.30 a.m. till 4.30 the following evening was pretty hard work, and my horse could scarcely put one leg before the other as we came in sight of the town and met Sir Owen Lanyon, Colonel Bellairs, and the warlike Executive Council Brigade, who were on the *qui vive* for our return. I took a seat in the basket-carriage of a Pretorian resident who had come out to meet us, and who, laden with Captain Sampson and a wounded sergeant of Nourse's Horse, was now making his way in again. I towed my horse behind, and eventually entrusted him to my friend's intelligent Kaffir servant to take up to my quarters in the military camp. The woolly-headed son of Africa took him into the Convent Redoubt, and 'off-saddled' him there; and when eventually he did arrive at his right quarters, I found on examining my holster that my valuable revolver had been 'annexed' by some enterprising volunteer, who doubtless thought the increasing of his own armoury at the expense of mine was quite a legitimate transaction in 'the piping time' of war.

As I reached the entrance to the camp, an Hibernian lady—whose better-half, a Foot Volunteer, had been conspicuous by the absence of that dash which made the sons of Erin famous in Britain's battles when the Connaught Rangers' charge decided the day—made a rush at me, and in the richest of Clare brogues said—

'I beg yer pardon, but did ye see my man?'

Adopting her accent as nearly as possible, I replied—

'In troth an' I did, ma'am; wid his gun in one hand, and his bay'net in the other, chargin' the kopje, and the Boers "loopin" before him.'

'Ah, then,' said she in a modulated whisper, 'would ye take a tint of anything to dhrink?'

I declined, and pushed on to secure luxurious rest in my waggon; and when next I heard of the Irish lady's better-half, the description of whose valorous exploits I had given so freely, it was to learn that the unfortunate old fellow had been court-martialled for cowardice, dismissed from the corps he belonged to, and degraded to menial employment for the rest of the siege. I need not add that I gave his fair lady a wide berth after wards.

Burnt red with exposure to a blazing sun, worn out with the fatigue so long a day and so much saddlework produced, I scribbled a few hasty lines for the *Camp News*, just on the point of issuing from the press, and then, booted and spurred, tumbled



into my waggon, too tired to even relieve myself of the field glasses and telescope which had served me so usefully on more than one occasion, besides the particular one when the 'nine pounder' threatened destruction to my gallant comrades of the Carabineers. What a luxury that deep sleep engendered of hard physical exercise truly is! and it required but few seconds from the time I turned in, to carry my weary brain far away from scenes of blood and carnage, from moving incident and motionless death, from shout of success, or from moan of pain.

The day after the action at the Zwartkopje, the first military funerals were held in Pretoria, and the red-coated soldiers, whose avocation was war and its consequent risks, and the young volunteers who for the time being had adopted a similar hazard, were borne to their last home with all the honours conferred by martial pomp and power. The pipers in front played a Scottish lament, and wild and weird the skirl of the Highland pipes sounded as the procession halted near the military cemetery; and amidst the most intense quietude the comrades of bearded soldier and boy-volunteer shouldered their remains and bore them to their final resting-places, where the only *revuillé* likely to disturb their sleep will be that of the last trumpet, at which Revelation sayeth, 'the dead shall be raised incorruptible.'

A colour-sergeant of the Scots Fusiliers was one of the first to fall during the 'charge' at the Zwartkopje. Poor fellow, he was within a very few months of his twenty-one years' service, and had been painting the pictures of his fancy in the most vivid colours as to his intentions 'when the war was over' and 'he was going home.' Leading his file of men, he fell, shot through the chest; and now the red sand of the Transvaal, thrown over him by his brother-sergeants, hid all his hopes, fears, and aspirations.

Next him, a young Carabineer, who but a few weeks before had been a clerk in the Standard Bank, lay with a bullet through his heart—his young life ended in his nineteenth year. A comrade of the same age lay next him, and another in all the vigour of his manhood alongside. Some young privates of the Scots Fusiliers, who had succumbed to their wounds during the night, made up the quota of the killed; and I have a distinct recollection of getting into a waggon on the return from the Zwartkopje, in answer to his request to turn one of these poor fellows on to his back, in which position he fancied he would feel more at ease. I don't know why, I suppose it is the feeling generated by a common humanity, but I somehow seemed to feel a personal interest in this poor fellow, and the recollection of his words of thanks for the trifling

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office I had performed for him the evening before, brought his pale, distressed face quite vividly before me.

Strip war of the mantle of its glories and excitements, and it will disclose a gibbering ghost of pain, anxiety, grief, disappointment, and despair.





The Attack at Elandsfontein Ridge.

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Book: With a Show Through Southern Africa, and Personal Reminiscences of the Transvaal War.

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